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Draft report

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Addendum

Coordination questions: report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination

(*Item 4 (a)*)

Annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2017

1. At its 4th meeting, on 5 June 2018, the Committee considered the annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) for 2017 (E/2018/48).

2. The Secretary of CEB introduced the report and responded to questions raised during its consideration by the Committee.

Discussion

3. Delegations expressed appreciation for the comprehensive and detailed report, which was recognized as an effective means of enhancing the transparency of the activities and accountability of CEB. Consideration of the annual report by the Committee was seen as an important opportunity to engage with the work of the Board. Delegations stressed the need for transparency with regard to the activities of CEB and recognized that efforts to engage with Member States had been demonstrated through substantive dialogues and briefings, as well as the sharing of information through the CEB website. In particular, the publication of system-wide financial and human resources data was highlighted as a contribution to increasing transparency. Attention was also drawn to the online United Nations System Data Catalog, which provided a single point of access to thematic data spanning the United

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Nations system. The Board was urged to continue to make further efforts to promote effective cooperation with Member States and to ensure transparency and accountability.

4. Delegations broadly recognized and expressed support for the important role played by CEB in strengthening system-wide policy coherence and coordination, avoiding duplication of effort, increasing efficiency and optimizing the use of resources, especially with regard to United Nations system support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and follow-up to the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. CEB was urged to continue to strengthen the collective capacities of United Nations system entities to support Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda. In that context, it was stressed that poverty eradication was at the heart of the 2030 Agenda and, therefore, should also be central to the work of CEB, along with the achievement of the other Sustainable Development Goals. CEB was also seen to have a role in helping to achieve Member States' vision for United Nations reform.

5. Several delegations stressed the importance of continuing to ensure that the work of the Board was guided by intergovernmental mandates and supported the priorities of Member States. Specifically, it was recalled that the high-level political forum on sustainable development was a source of political leadership in the promotion of sustainable development and that the Board must take into account guidance provided by it. Clarification was sought about the functioning of CEB as a coordination mechanism rather than as an implementing body.

6. The strategic leadership of CEB in the programmatic area was recognized. Delegations welcomed the United Nations System Strategic Approach on Climate Change Action and acknowledged the contributions of CEB to sustainable development through the promulgation of an analytical framework on risk and resilience and a United Nations system leadership framework. The role of the United Nations System Staff College in supporting the adoption and implementation of the leadership framework was noted.

7. Delegations broadly expressed support for the consideration by CEB of the contribution of technological innovation to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Taking systematic measures to leverage the opportunities offered by technology, including information and communications technology, was seen to be in the interest of all Member States. Efforts to enhance and strengthen United Nations system capacity to help countries to apply technology to achieve the Goals were welcomed. A few delegations, however, said that the focus on technology demonstrated an overly selective approach to the 2030 Agenda and that the report appeared to favour some aspects and ignore or dilute others. In that regard, it was stressed that CEB must respect intergovernmental mandates agreed upon by Member States. Another delegation said that, given the particularly expansive scope of the work of CEB, it was difficult to give equal weight to all activities in a single report. A delegation suggested that it was premature to develop new normative guidance on frontier technologies and innovation as Member States had not yet had the opportunity to discuss the issue. It was also suggested that CEB further explore the potential role of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism established under the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development to harness technology for sustainable development, and the view was expressed that the report would have benefited from including information to that effect.

8. A delegation attached particular importance to the Board's monitoring of the system-wide follow-up to the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020, expressing support for efforts

to reduce poverty aimed at graduation from the least developed country category. While it was noted that CEB would continue to focus on the most vulnerable, including the least developed countries, it was proposed that CEB also consider the challenges confronting middle-income countries in their pursuit of sustainable development. The aim would be to raise awareness of the roles of United Nations organizations and promote system-wide coordination in assisting that group of more than 100 countries to meet the Goals.

9. With regard to management and administration, it was recognized that CEB and its subsidiary machinery were uniquely positioned to leverage the strengths and expertise of the United Nations system to implement improvements in human resources, finance, procurement and other management functions. Appreciation was expressed for the achievements of the High-level Committee on Management in improving efficiency in those areas. Delegations encouraged the High-level Committee to continue to work on mutual recognition and harmonization of business practices with a view to realizing further efficiencies and continuing to improve effectiveness across the system.

10. In particular, delegations voiced support for the continuation of efforts to enhance mutual recognition and harmonization in procurement. Several welcomed the increased number of vendors from developing countries and countries with economies in transition registered with the United Nations Global Marketplace. Information was requested on any plans for new procurement principles and other joint procurement activities.

11. Several delegations commended the Board on its efforts to address sexual harassment within the organizations of the United Nations system through the task force led by the Chair of the High-level Committee on Management and expressed support for the Board's continued prioritization of that initiative, urging bold and frank action. It was stressed that sexual exploitation and abuse was not simply a human resources management issue; rather, it had fundamental implications for the credibility of the Organization and therefore required the attention and commitment of all United Nations system executive heads. Similarly, delegations expressed appreciation for the system-wide determination to combat sexual exploitation and abuse that had been championed by the Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. Efforts to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, including through the United Nations system-wide strategy on gender parity, should also continue.

12. Delegations widely commended the High-level Committee on Management on its work to support multilingualism, welcoming, among other things, the adoption of both the Akoma Ntoso Extensible Markup Language standard for the United Nations documentation environment and of a United Nations semantic interoperability framework, which was expected to lead to considerable efficiencies in document management and translation processes, as well as greater accessibility for persons with disabilities. Those efforts were seen as important for the General Assembly. The development of a strategic policy framework on multilingualism was expected to serve as a benchmark for other United Nations entities in their efforts to raise the profile of multilingualism.

13. A delegation welcomed the adoption by the High-level Committee on Management of a single agreed definition across the United Nations system of what constituted fraud and suspected or presumptive fraud, expressing the hope that it would help in the development of effective counter-fraud policies.

14. In the context of operational activities for development, the Board's decision to take the United Nations Development Group outside the CEB architecture was noted. The view was expressed that the new generation of United Nations Development

Assistance Frameworks must remain centred on sustainable development and that development should not be mixed with the humanitarian, human rights or sustaining peace dimensions. A delegation said that such a nexus approach was not in line with General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

15. Citing General Assembly resolution 72/279 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, hope was expressed that the new resident coordinator system would further improve cooperation between Governments and United Nations country teams. Clarification was sought on the new system-wide cost-sharing arrangement to support the reinvigorated development system.

16. With regard to coordination between CEB and other jointly financed bodies, the Board's cooperation with the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) was welcomed, with CEB encouraged to maintain it as a priority. A delegation underscored the need for the Secretary-General, as Chair of CEB, to continue to use CEB as a forum to ensure the full, uniform and timely implementation of ICSC and General Assembly decisions on the common system. The Board's support for the work of the Joint Inspection Unit was also welcomed. Furthermore, the efforts of the Task Force on Accounting Standards to sustain compliance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards were recognized.

Conclusions and recommendations

17. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly take note of the annual overview report of CEB for 2017 (E/2018/48).**

18. **The Committee welcomed the continued contributions of CEB, delivered within the existing mandates of its member organizations, throughout 2017 on United Nations system-wide coherence, coordination, effectiveness, efficiency and accountability.**

19. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to continue to include in the reports of CEB to the Committee information on action taken on the wide range of programmatic, management and operational issues linked to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to ensure coordinated United Nations system-wide support in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.**

20. **The Committee reiterated its recommendations to the General Assembly to bring to the attention of the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, the need to ensure that the Board's activities and initiatives, including those relating to system-wide coherence, which also encompassed the principle of voluntary adoption of the "Delivering as one" approach, as defined in General Assembly resolution 71/243, were fully in line with intergovernmental mandates.**

21. **The Committee underlined that United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, while being risk-informed, must preserve their focus on sustainable development and be elaborated and implemented in accordance with national ownership.**

22. **The Committee recognized the continued efforts of CEB to enhance collaboration on procurement activities, including increasing the opportunities for vendors from developing countries and countries with economies in transition, and recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to continue his efforts in that regard.**

23. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to remind the executive heads of the participating organizations of the need to ensure enhanced alignment of the measures of the High-level Committee on Management with the existing United Nations legislative framework.**

24. **The Committee highlighted that effectively addressing sexual harassment had fundamental implications for the credibility of the United Nations system and in that regard welcomed the zero-tolerance policy put in place by the Secretary-General, recommending that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to continue to urge all United Nations system organizations to make the issue a matter of priority.**

25. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to continue to urge all common system organizations to ensure the full, uniform and timely implementation of all the decisions of ICSC and the General Assembly.**